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SAN FRANCISCO'S EMERGENT BALLET

by Aubrey Haines

When Ted Shawn stepped to the front of the stage in the theater named after him near Lee, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1956, he had the air of a man on the verge of a momentous event. "In the past three summers," he told the audience," the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival has presented the American debuts of the National Ballet of Canada, the Celtic Ballet of Scotland, and Ten Leading Dancers of the Royal Danish Ballet. All three achieved such success here that they were offered major American tours.

"Now Jacob's Pillow has another debut to present which is, I believe, comparable to its predecessors in geographical variety and artistic impact." For the first time an East Coast audience was to witness a performance by the San Francisco Ballet.

It had taken the twenty-three-year-old company all that time to venture across the Rocky Mountains. When the curtain rose on George Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco*, an intricately-designed abstraction of the Bach *Double Violin Concerto*, balletomanes in the house recognized that Shawn had again selected the right group for the proper occasion. In *Concerto Barocco* the dancers revealed the unity of style, *esprit de corps*, and thoroughness of discipline that are the natural outcome of rigorous training in a company school.

Their presentation of *The Dryad* was completely charming. Using Schubert's *Fantasy in F Minor* for piano duet, Op. 103, Lew Christensen created a story ballet that maintained sufficient choreographic independence to be consistently interesting as a dance structure as well as a dramatic fantasy. Lujan's libretto concerns a dryadic cult and the murder of two hunters: one in the Middle Ages and one in the nineteenth century, who unwisely disturb the wood nymphs. As the nineteenth-century hunter Conrad Ludlow was a

brilliant dancer. Light and vivid, he seemed born to the stage. Nancy Johnson as the Dryad not only danced sensitively but created an aura of character. Like Ludlow and the rest of the company she was more finished in straight dancing than in mime. The corps was practically impeccable. The company which had so long been a source of regional pride had now matured into a veritable national asset!

Although the San Francisco Ballet, through its continual association with the San Francisco Opera, is the oldest ballet ensemble in the United States, the average age of its members is, as Igor Stravinski put it, "indecently young"—19.8 years old. Many of the dancers were born and brought up in San Francisco and received their training at the San Francisco Ballet School. But the leading dancers also received extensive training elsewhere in the United States and Europe, which has added to their experienc and broadened their interpretive ability.

The company was founded as the San Francisco Opera Ballet in 1933, its main purpose being to keep the opera company supplied with dancers. At the same time, however, the San Francisco Ballet was founded to assure the new ballet company of a permanent source of well-trained talent. The three organizations are still closely associated. Although it is now a separate entity, the San Francisco Ballet still provides dancers for the San Francisco Opera Company.

From the very beginning the ballet company began to make a name for itself apart from its affiliation with the opera. Under the leadership of Odolph Bolm, its first choreographer, it staged many successful productions and established ballet as a part of the permanent cultural scene of San Francisco.

Serge Oukrainsky, succeeding Bolm as choreographer in 1937, continued to extend the company's scope of production. The future development of the organization was presaged when Oukrainsky appointed Willam Christensen as premier danseur. A year later Christensen succeeded Oukrainsky, whereupon a new era for the company began.

Christensen made the San Francisco Ballet a full-scale organization. To its repertoire he added the full-length ballet, presenting such works as *Coppelia*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Nutcracker* in their entirety. So successful did *The Nutcracker* prove to be that its annual Christmas presentation has become a tradition in major Pacific Coast cities. Venturing its first tours, the company took its productions to many cities in the Western United States. In addition, its leading performers appeared with other companies enabling them to achieve international prominence.

As the performing company progressed to extensive productions, the ballet school grew also. With Harold Christensen, Willam's brother, in charge, the association of the school with the performing company was remarkably close and still is to the mutual benefit of both organizations. Harold remains as head of the school, which—in his hands—has become the second largest of its kind in the nation and has achieved a reputation no less important than that of the performing company.

Willam Christensen remained as head of the company until 1951. Then he went to the University of Utah in Salt Lake City to assume charge of the first completely self-contained ballet school ever established by a university. The Christensen name remained associated with the San Francisco Ballet, however, for Willam's place was taken by a third brother, Lew.

Some years earlier Lew Christensen had joined the organization after accumulating a wealth of experience with various New York companies as dancer, choreographer, and director. The present character of the company results in no small part from his efforts. Carrying on the progressive tradition initiated by Willam, Lew added brilliantly to the company's repertoire with his original ballets and guided the company to greater artistic achievement.

A fortunate result of Lew's leadership has been an exchange agreement made in 1952 between the San Francisco Ballet and the New York City Ballet. At the time Christensen was serving as director of the East Coast organization. Having a position on both coasts at the same time kept him flying back and forth across the continent. Under the exchange agreement each company was able to perform works from the repertoire of the other as well as to exchange solo dancers. Thus the San Francisco Ballet's active repertoire was further enriched by works of the New York City Ballet's famed choreographer, George Balanchine. In turn the New York group presented to East Coast audiences Christensen's work with San Francisco dancers in the solo parts.

The public was enthusiastic about what they witnessed. Critical acclaim, too, presaged the first tour of the San Francisco Ballet to the opposite side of the continent. On this tour the company performed for three weeks at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival under Shawn's aegis. This dance festival attracts greater attention nationally than any other in the United States. There in the Berkshires the dancers received the unanimous acclaim of America's most distinguished critics.

"The company showed itself capable of meeting the rigid demands of both the classical and romantic styles," said the New York *Times*. "The whole group danced with such wit and exuberance that it was completely captivating."

Who could have dreamed on the organization's first East Coast appearance that within three years it would become the most-traveled classical ballet company in the world? After three international tours as cultural representatives of the United States under sponsorship of the American National Theatre and Academy in conjunction with the State Department the dancers are, indeed, veritable ambassadors of good will.

In January, 1957, the San Francisco Ballet embarked on a globe-circling tour of the Far East. On this history-making trip they became the first American company to perform anywhere in the Far East as well as the first organization from any Western nation to perform in this part of the world since the 1920's, when Anna Pavlova toured the Far East. The ten-week tour took the company some 35,000 miles across Asia. Everywhere audiences numbered in the thousands. The dancers excited comment on the street, in the press, and at their performances. "They looked like an exotic flock of

graceful, long-legged egrets," said the Singapore *Tiger*.

Back in America, the San Francisco Ballet soon received a second and a third invitation to make further tours. In January, 1959, the troupers departed on a three and one-half months' tour of Latin America with three words of caution from the State Department, "Don't talk politics." Art triumphed over politics despite riots and political turbulence in some of the sixteen Central and South American countries where the dancers performed.

Following these appearances they went to the Middle East and to Central and North America. Once again they danced in the heart of violent rioting, this time in Beirut, Lebanon. Nevertheless, the performances were held as scheduled and the houses were packed. "When the curtain opened, the whole audience applauded us," one of the dancers wrote home.

"Appreciation of the Ballet's technical staff cannot be neglected," said the American Embassy in Beirut. "It had a difficult stage to work with, but these able, tireless technicians with skillful lighting and staging overcame all the difficulties. It is quite evident that both dancers and technical staff are not only devoted to their mission but ready to do their best with what is available without temperament or complaint."

In the past three and a half years the San Francisco Ballet has captivated many kinds of audiences. They have danced before the King of Thailand, before Madame Chiang Kai-Shek in Formosa, and before the Governor General of Hong Kong and the Prime Minister of Burma. In the Philippines they met the late President Magsaysay. Lew Christensen was decorated by the King of Cambodia. The group gave special performances for students and for orphans. The King and Queen of Greece witnessed a command performance, and Emperor Haile Selassie awarded each dancer with a gold medal. These experiences have acted as a catalyst in the maturing of this youthful, vigorous ballet company, which is now recognized throughout the world for its effective expression of American beauty, vitality, and spirit.

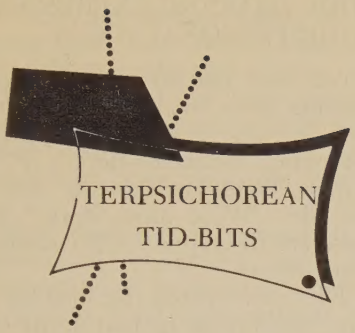
Ideally a ballet company should have year-round employment. However, San Francisco is too small a city to accommodate constant patronage. The ballet organization serves the opera company nine weeks each year in San Francisco besides touring with the opera to Los Angeles for two weeks and appearing in several other California cities. This is followed by six performances of *The Nutcracker* in San Francisco and suburban cities. In the spring the communities, consisting of varied programs which often introduce new works. Furthermore, it participates in various summer concert series about six times annually. This makes about thirty appearances annually, not including its engagement with the opera.

To hold the company together between engagements and to mount new productions requires more than the skill and dedication of the directors and the dancers; it takes money. The San Francisco Ballet Guild, under its president ,Mrs. William Bayless, collects ten dollars a year from about 400 members. An additional chapter at Palo Alto, under Mrs. Hugh David Phillips, has a membership of around 100. Two or three patrons contribute $100 a year, and there are occasional gifts. The rest of the company's support comes from benefits—usually the sponsoring of the opening night of a visiting ballet—and from *Nutcracker* profits.

The school also helps in supporting the ballet company. The San Francisco Ballet School—now in bright, new headquarters on 18th Avenue—has an enrollment of approximately 400 students. Not only do Lew and Harold Christensen and Lujan teach at the school, but the company's principal dancers also conduct classes along with faculty members from outside.

"The greater percentage of company members learned their first steps at our school," says Lew Christensen. "We welcome talented and well-trained dancers from other schools, especially since our style of dancing—clean-cut fast, and technically demanding—winnows out something like ninety-five per cent of the students who come to study. Probably most dancers who drop out do so for physical reasons: either inadequate strength, muscles that do not have real tone, poor feet, or unpleasing bodies. Some get impatient and go into easier fields of television, films, or musical comedy. But the school is larger than ever and continues to supply us with raw material from all over the West."

The present solo dancers with the company are Jocelyn Vollmar,



by William D'Albrew

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(see page 10)

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Nancy Johnson, Sally Bailey, Richard Carter, Roderick Drew, Fiona Fuerstner, Virginia Johnson, Louise Lawler, Sue Loyd, Paula Tracy, Eugenia Van Horn, Michael Smuin, Kent Stowell, and Julian Herrin.

What the company and school will accomplish yet in the future seems most promising. "The San Francisco Ballet School has been chosen by the Ford Foundation along with the American Ballet School in New York to develop and organize the dance potential in America," says Leon Kalimos, the company's managing director.

* Since the writing of this article James Graham Lujan is no longer associated with the San Francisco Ballet. There have also been a few changes in the company's dancers.

(D'Albrew continued from page 9)

WHAT'S IN A NAME? that which
we call a rose
By any other name would smell
as sweet.

Thomas Haynes Bayly—
"Quadrille a la Mode"
Poet—England. 1797-1839

While on a witness stand in a court room, an attrictive young lady was asked her occupation. She replied that she was an elimination artist. Further questioning revealed that she was a strip-tease dancer.

* * *

UNTIL 1902-03, a minstrel blackface hoofer was always a man. That was changed when at the New York Theatre Roof a novelty was presented titled "NED WAYBURN'S MINSTREL MISSES." Burnt cork was used to blacken the faces of the chorus and this combined with minstrel steps and their feminine gestures received a big ovation from the audience. Ned Wayburn, noted producer and operator of dance studios at that time, called this hybrid form, "Tap and Step dancing." This was the first use of the term "tap."

TERPSICHOREAN TID-BITS

By William D'Albrew

O give me new figures! I can't go
on dancing
The same that were taught me ten
seasons ago;
The school master over the land is
advancing,
Then why is the master of dancing
so slow?
It is such a bore to be always
caught tripping
In dull uniformity year after year;
Invent something new, and you'll
set me a skipping
I want a new figure to dance with
my Dear.

YOUR DANCING EXPRESSES YOUR PERSONALITY!

You may not know it, but your dancing gives you away. If you're a snob, a bully, or a bore, they'll find you out on the dance floor.

Russ Tamblyn, dancing star of the film "West Side Story," says these are the types you'll encounter everywhere!

The Snob. From the look on his face, you'd think he had drunk sour milk and still can't get the taste out of his mouth.

The Athlete. He pushes his partner into every couple that passes, as if she were a basketball and he might be penalized for not dribbling. *She* puts all her weight on her partner's arm as if, when he finally falls, she would pin him like a professional wrestler.

The Timid Souls. They take tiny, shaky steps: they dance apart from each other as if both had the plague; and they'd just *die* if you stared at them.

The Old Folks. They dance as if they carried weights on their backs —each step in agony. If they ever lifted up a foot from the ground, the effort would give them heart failure.

The Husband-and-Wife. "Will you stop crushing my feet?" I would if you'd take longer steps!" "You always were a rotten dancer." "You still *are.*"

Withthis as an introduction, you should easily recognize the jealous type, the lovers, the amateur musicians, *and* the show-offs.

Want to improve your dancing? This is what Russ recommends:

Lift your feet, and put pep into that step.

Stand erect, as if you were walking. Not only will you dance better, you'll look better.

Never criticize your partner's dancing . . . and don't apologize

excessively. If you dance poorly, you have no business being on the dance floor. Start taking lessons or go back on a refresher course.

Be considerate of your partner. Don't clutch his hand as if you were going down for the third time. Don't hum, sing, or laugh into his ear.

Men, don't dance forward all the time—stroll backward too. And women, learn to lead, so you can anticipate what your partner will do. But never lead—unless, of course, you're dancing with another woman.

And finally, keep in practice. Russ Tamblyn says: "Professional dancers, like those in 'West Side Story,' train much harder to keep in trim than football players. The social dancer should keep this in mind—and keep up to date and keep in shape."

FAMOUS DANCERS

America has produced many famous dancers — including Martha Graham, Ruth St. Denis, Isadora Duncan, and Alma Cummings.

Who is Alma Cummings? In 1923, at the first dance marathon held in the U.S., she set a world's record by staying on her feet for 27 hours.

Perhaps the most colorful of American dancers was Isadora Duncan. She rejected the formalities of ballet. She believed in free, natural dancing—in fact, she danced barefoot. Among other things, she felt that the human soul was situated in the solar plexus.

George Balanchine, ballet master of the New York City Center Ballet, recalls having seen Miss Duncan in Russia. "To me it was absolutely unbelievable," he says.

After many spectacular triumphs in 1927 Isadora met a spectacular death. She was driving a car in Nice, France, when her long flowing scarf got caught in a wheel, and she was strangled.

About another American dancer, George Balanchine has some pleas-

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ant words. The most interesting, most inventive, and most elegant dancer of our time, according to Balanchine, is none other than Fred Astaire!

THE BENEFITS OF DANCING

Dancing can not only be a beautiful thing to watch but also has many benefits for dancers — both amateur and professional. It's good rhythmical exercise. It can help develop social poise, help a person win new friends. It's recommended to bring shy people out of their cocoons.

Dancing is a fine way to help elderly persons become active again. And people with emotional problems are helped by group dancing. Yes, dancing has all sorts of benefits—except if you want to cure a sore toe or a headache.

Up she goes—and dancing, too, is reaching new heights of artistry with the new film, "West Side Story." Famed choreographer Agnes De Mille called the movie a point of departure for "a more fluid, mobile theater." The dancers in the $5,000,000 film are considered the best of their kind in the world; for every one of the 60 dancers in the cast 50 to 150 were screened and rejected.

It takes a lot of hard work to achieve the casual, lounging look of a teenager on the New York streets which served as location for the movie "West Side Story." The director of dancing for the film, Jerome Robbins, was known to the cast as a perfectionist who worked them six days a week, an average of 12 hours a day. The dancers wore out 200 pairs of shoes; the boys split 27 pairs of trousers. But it was worth it; the dancing in the picture is considered a milestone by choreographer Agnes De Mille and other experts.

"A SPARE BUT NO FLAT"

By Lyn Dellis

Had a "spare tire" round my middle
Where the fat was firmly encased
But since taking up the cha cha
It's no longer going to waist.

OSTERHOUSE STUDIO TO BE DEMOLISHED

The Phil Osterhouse Dance Studio in Grand Rapids, Mich. has been purchased by the city to make way for its $1,000,000 downtown parking ramp.

And just where does this leave Phil? From last account it leaves him with an additional $135,000.00 in his bank account which the city had to fork over for his choice property.

Not so bad as the headline above might lead you to believe. It should happen to more dance teachers—bless 'em.

The Osterhouse Studio will be relocated in the near future—place and date to be announced.

Left: Olga Ziceva of San Mateo, California. Right: Vida Blunden of Los Angeles, California. Olga Ziceva played host to Vida Blunden during summer sojourn in San Mateo. Miss Ziceva has recently returned to her classes after recuperation from a back injury which necessitated traction.

FAIRY TALE THEATRE

(San Francisco)

A comedy version of the fairy tale PUSS IN BOOTS, in three acts and six scenes, directed and choreographed by Sergei Temoff, was presented by the Fairy Tale Theatre, at the Nourse Auditorium, November 5th. Artist Russell Hartley designed the costumes and sets. Don Ransom executed and painted the scenic sets.

The dance play consisted of 25 actors and dancers with title role of the Cat played by Bob Chiappari. The ballerina Princess was danced by Angene Feves, who performed as a soloist with the Venice Opera Ballet and with the Rome Chamber Ballet. Miss Feves has also acted and danced in Italian films and TV programs in Rome.

Other principals were Franklin Caillat as the Court Master, Jacob Sigg as the Sorcerer and Al Carr as the Prince.

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LENINGRAD BALLET COMPANY APPEARS IN AMERICA FOR THE FIRST TIME

(Interview given by People's Artist of U.S.S.R. Konstantin Sergeyev, Chief Ballet Master of the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theater of Leningrad, to Anna Ilupina, ballet critic.)

This autumn the ballet company of the Kirov Theater in Leningrad is to make its initial appearance in the United States and Canada.

Last season the company showed its Leningrad audiences several premieres, including *Masquerade* based on the drama by the great Russian poet Lermontov, *Legend of Love* based on the libretto by Nazin Nikmet (after his own play of that name), and a brief but very modern ballet choreographed by the young choreographer Igor Belsky to the music of the First Movement of Shostakovich's *Leningrad [Seventh] Symphony.* Besides, the theater has been preparing another highly modern production, *Mystery-Buff,* after the play by the Soviet poet Mayakovsky, to music by the Leningrad composer Karavaichuk. So unusual is this ballet in form that it is already evoking a heightened interest among Soviet balletomanes.

The company's American program includes several concert numbers, four big productions (Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake,* Adam's *Giselle* and most likely Melikov's *Legend of Love,* as well as fragments of other ballets, of which there are 20 in the theater's repertory. Of the fragments American audiences may see *Chopiniana,* the Rose Waltz from *Nutcracker,* the Shades scene from the old ballet *La Bayadere,* and a scene from Solovyov-Sedoi's *Taras Bulba* (after Gogol) abounding in fiery Ukrainian Cossack dances.

The Leningraders are fond of their ballet company's productions, both classical (some of which have been running for more than 100 years on the Kirov Theater's stage) and modern. The theater is always packed whenever a young dancer has his or her debut—and that is quite frequent.

Konstantin Sergeyev still appears on the stage in spite of his years. One must put in a great deal of work at the age of 50 to retain good form. And Sergeyev works hard with fine results. His long experience as a classical dancer and choreographer par excellence has helped launch many a new talent.

I had the occasion to watch Sergeyev coaching a very promising youth for his debut in the role of Prince Siegfried (*Swan Lake*). The two made a beautiful and deeply symbolic picture. Both, long-legged and sheathed in tights,—the slim eager-eyed young man, in light-grey, and the older man with dark shining eyes, calm, attentive and very discerning, in black—kept repeating a difficult variation in Act III without end. Sergeyev showed his pupil a few *pas.* The young artist understood at once what was demanded of him. After watching him, Sergeyev said:

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"That is better. Now let us go over the whole movement again, please."

It seemed as if Sergeyev would never be satisfied. Those who remember how he danced the part of Prince Siegfried with the great Ulanova can well understand why he is so exacting.

However, Sergeyev did not wish to have the youth copy him. On the contrary, what he wanted was to have the budding artist find something new for himself in the role. When I attended the debut of the artist a few days later, I was able to appreciate their work. It was one of the vivid examples of how the classical traditions are passed down to the younger generation.

Sergeyev's wife, Natalya Dudinskaya, a People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. and former Prima ballerina of the Leningrad ballet, will act as the chief coach of the company on tour. She leads a class of highly-qualified ballerinas of the Kirov Theater, and her lessons are both interesting and complex. Dudinskaya herself is a graduate of Professor Vaganova's class, which gave the world Ulanova and a whole peiad of ballet stars of the first magnitude.

Dudinskaya's pupils—both present and future celebrities—are the touching Irina Kolpakova, the beautiful Inna Zubkovskaya, the 22-year old Alla Sizova, a Leningrad truck-driver's daughter, Yuri Solovjev, a worker's son and the youthful Xenia Ter-Stepanova. After seeing them dance, I feel sure that you will find them as thrilling as I do.

"Our ballet," Konstantin Sergeyev told me, "is a very special company. Not only because, more than any other, it has preserved the traditions of the Russian school of the classical dance. You will agree that, since the Russian ballet school as a trend in art and a unique educational institution has been existing for 223 years, and

since the St. Petersburg, and later the Leningrad ballet, produced the great Pavlova, Karsavina, Fokin, Nijinsky, and our contemporaries Ulanova and Chabukiani, we can hardly ignore its traditions. However, though we are true to them, we do not approach them as museum relics. We are not traditional in the stilted sense of the word."

I understood what he meant. The Leningrad Theater represents diverse trends of modern Soviet choreography. It has staged the work of Yuri Grigorovich, a very imaginative choreographer *[The Stone Flower* and *Legend of Love],* and Leonid Yakobson's miniatures and monumental *Spartacus,* where the dancing is not performed "sur la pointes," and Igor Belsky who experiments in modern choreography. Finally, there are several productions by Konstantin Sergeyev himself—ranging from the classical fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty* to the very modern *Path of Thunder* devoted to the awakening of Africa and based on a combination of the elements of classical and African folk dances.

"That is how we understand traditions," Sergeyev pursued his point. "It lies in deep meaning, inspiration and consummate technique, indiversity of manners, difference of themes, and individual interpretations. Every one of our dancers is a vivid personality, and together they are artists who aspire towards a single aim—that of enriching and developing their art. We are proud of our theater also because its stage was the first to see the birth and formation of the new Soviet ballet repertory—*Flames of Paris,* devoted to the great French Revolution; *Laurencia* based on Lope de Vega's revellious drama *La Fuente Ovejuna; The Coast of Hope,* extolling the patriotism of Soviet man and their partisanship.

"It was here that most of the experiments were made in the Soviet ballet field. We dancers and ballet masters of the thirties staged the first choreographic poem *Fountain of Bakhchisarai,* based on the poem of that name by the genius of Russian literature, Alexander Pushkin. The same period was marked by our first choreographic novel *Lost Illusions,* after Balzac, and first choreographic tragedy, *Romeo and Juliet,* after Shakespeare. Thus, we experimented as we produced ballets consonant with the very spirit of the Soviet people. They were revolutionary productions, pursuing the aim of introducing themes of literature and events in keeping with the new ethical and esthetic ideals, the burning issues of today.

"Soviet choreography as a whole strives to resolve these problems. Many Soviet opera and ballet theaters, of which there were only two, and now there are more than 30, have plenty to show and say to the foreign spectator. If I speak of our theater as being 'special,' it is not so much because I am personally associated with it but because it has always blazed new trails in the field of the ballet. It was after being produced on our stage that many of our ballets found their way to other theaters both within and outside the Soviet Union. And I can assure you that we shall go on trying to retain our priority in this respect."

"What new productions have you in mind?"

"Right after our return from the United States and Canada we shall present *Mystery-Buff.* We shall be on tour for more than two months, following our New York premiere at the Metropolitan Opera

NEW YORK dance report

by D.N.S.-Russell

The big companies, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Ballet Theatre and The Metropolitan Opera Ballet, are moving towards contract signatures for the new season, the Ballet Theatre Foundation scouting and signing talent, mostly from its own school. Dancers signed recently include Mariana Orlando as first soloist; Bruce Marks as soloist; and former Royal Swedish Ballet dancer, Caj Selling, corps. At the Met., secretary Mme. Alfredo Corvino was vacationing and the office reported contracts would not be signed until "at least September." Ballet Russe also gave September as contracts signing date. . . . Indian dancer-choreo. Bhaskar meanwhile was forming a small company of "all-American, jazz dancers" for a tour of India soon . . . Eschewing his own medium, to avoid "taking coals to Newcastle," he planned on about six boys and girls thoroughly cognizant of jazz, preferably tall, blond, and alien to the Hindu idiom . . . Don Sky has completed taping of five Shari Lewis TV shows, staging movement for guest stars . . . He was due to pick up the Charlotte Summer Theatre's last four shows of the season in August, relieving former Perry Como TV hour choreo., Louis da Pron, who began the season for him while he taped . . . Anna Paulina was planning a 82nd St. "Y" concert for November, probably on a shared program basis with one other group . . . Carlos

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House on September 10. While 95 of us are away, the remaining 59 dancers will go on presenting our current repertory and preparing for future premieres. On our return we shall all set to work on Solovyov-Sedoi's *Friendship* devoted to the world youth festival. At the same time, I shall begin work on *Hamlet,* the music for which is being written by the gifted Azerbaijan composer Kara Karayev, with whom I cooperated on *Path of Thunder.* You see, all three ballets are new, and will be first presented at the Kirov Theater of Leningrad . . ."

Sergeyevich might have named some other ballets of the near and distant future which will first see the footlights in Leningrad, but the Chief Ballet Master had to examine the new settings and costumes for "*Sleeping Beauty* designed by Solko Virsaladze for the company's tour of America.

As I took my leave of Sergeyev, he said.

"If your account of our interview reaches America before we do, please tell your readers that we shall be very happy to meet our American audiences. We are very happy to visit America, to 'discover' it for ourselves and to be discovered by the Americans; we are anxious to have them know more about our art—our soul. And since the soul of the Russians is always open for expressions of good will, such a 'mutual discovery' can only be beneficial to all concerned."

Macri appeared at the Carter Baron Amphitreatre in Washington, D.C., briefly, before joining "Milk and Honey" . . . Out of Washington, Leon Fokine currently commutes to New York and New Jersey to guest instruct for his mother, Alexandra Fedorova Fokine, and sister, Irine . . . He will move to New York permanently this fall . . . Beverly Ann Paulsen headed the Normandi Hotel, Loch Sheldrake, N.Y., dance festival. . . . Judy Garland appeared July 29 at the 1961 Forest Hills Music Festival . . . Lionel Shepard presented his "Mime and Me" Co. with Jimmy Gavin and Sykes in a July 17 program at the Living Theatre, where he teaches . . . Sol Hurok delivered an appreciation address on the work of ANTA and the Dance Theatre at the recent dance festival in Los Angeles, where at least 20 dancers are reported to have been "spotted" with jobs and promises of jobs . . .

* * *

Dance Magazine and the New Times and Herald Tribune are among publications who have devoted extensive space to reviews and excerpts of the new "Fokine—Memoirs of a Balletmaster," translated by his son, Vitale . . . On the July issue cover of the London Dancing Times, the picture showed a Leningrad Theatre ballet star backed by a huge portrait of Michel hanging on the wall. Many U.S. students are familiar with the portrait from class association, it is one of two paintings by the late choreo. sent from here to the Russian theatre's archives by Vitale in 1959, together with correspondence, drawings and other material for the theatre museum's special section devoted to Fokine. Out of these archives now also comes another book, compiled and authored by the son and three other experts, collaborating via mail, to commemorate the artist's 20th year of death. Titled, "The Heritage of Fokine," the book will be published by the Leningrad Press in Russia in late 1962, comprised of two volumes, 1800 pages, 360 pictures (in contrast to the sparsely illustrated memoirs published here by Little and Brown). Collaborators with Vitale on the book are Yuri Slavinsky, Serge Morchinin and Mme. Dobrovolska. The son's contribution will deal with Fokine's personal life, the others will survey his

work, musical compositions, approach to choreography and so forth. In England, meanwhile, the American Memoirs are being reissued in the same form for the British public by London publishers, Constable.

Leningrad's Maryinsky Ballet Co., still reflecting publicity rays shed on it by its defaulting member in England, is due to open its Met. Opera season Sept. 11 playing the City through Sept. 30, prior to a 10 week national tour . . . The New York City ballet is scheduled to appear later this year on TV in the "Noah and the Flood" work specially commissioned by CBS from George Balanchine and Igor Stravinsky . . . Taping is predicted for early fall . . . Following telecast, the ballet will enter the company's permanent repertoire . . . The TV version of the hour-length dance-drama will be directed by Kirk Browning . . . Meanwhile, the New York City Ballet appeared at the Empire State Music Festival in Bear Mountain July 13, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19, alternating with opera and concerts . . . Among the opera ballet contingent was Lois Leabo, wife of dance illustrator Karl Leabo . . . Gloria Contreras was opera choreo. for the festival through Aug. 6 . . . Karl Leabo has just designed Issue X of Dance Perspective, devoted to the rather earthy dance medium known as Danse du Ventre (belly dancing). Designer Leabo is also in process of preparing a new souvenir book for New York City Center's fall season, and posters and a souvenir program for the Robert Joffrey Bal-

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let Co.'s first of the year tour . . . Jean Erdman was awarded a one-year grant-in-aid by the Ingram Merrill Foundation to complete a full length theatre piece suggested by James Joyce's "Finnegan's Wake." Miss Erdman announced she was cancelling her customary fall and spring tours for the coming seasons to complete work on the piece, a "dramatic work for actors who can move like dancers." She will, however, participate as usual in the Vancouver International Festival in Canada, heading the special summer school of dance and theatre program arranged at University of Vancouver to coincide with the festival. She will perform in a solo recital and choreograph a group work for the students.

* * *

Constance Loux has opened the season of her Children's Repertory Theatre with Long Island area performances of "The Red Shoes" and "Beggar Boy of Baghdad," which she later hopes to present off-B'way. Principal girl in most of her shows is usually a ballet dancer . . . "Topsy Turvy Town," a children's musical by Lewis Allan, directed by his wife Anne Allan, with several dance roles was forming a second road company to fill overflow of local bookings . . . Director Allan is former program director of the Dance Center of Los Angeles . . . The company is booked through the winter season including December dates in White Plains, Westchester, New Jersey and Connecticut . . . Choreo-director Nelle Fisher, whose "The Littlest Circus" may soon be put on film, auditioned in October for a package of "The Boy Friend," which she was to stage and direct for a three months national tour of U.S. Army bases . . . Miss Fisher's sister, Claire, latterly has undertaken chores of press agenting for the Circus, which with Miss Fisher's own Dance Carnival company, was booked for several performances including a November engagement in Detroit and a December gala concert in Cincinatti . . . The companies were successfully received at the closing of the Boston Fine Arts Festival, according to Miss Fisher . . .

Members of the visiting Kirov Company hosted the son of Michel Fokine, choeo.-author Vitale at rehearsals and classes before departing New York. In return, Vitale Fokine entertained Artistic director, Konstantin Sergeyev, and dancer Igor Belsky and spouse at his private home in Long Island, and showed relics of his father's works . . . Mr. Fokine also attended rehearsals of former pupil, Anna Galina, young premiere danseuse of the touring Theatre D'Art du Ballet, for which he originally staged the Fokine repertoire during two years as the company's choreo. in Paris . . . Viewing Galina in

William Dollar's "Francesca da Rimini" in rehearsal in the studio of Maria Nevelska, Mr. Fokine commented favorably on the young dancer, who "has come a long way" in the field of acrobatic adagio, he felt, since her precocious ballerina debut some five years ago . . . Another Fokine family member, Leon, cousin of Vitale, formerly moved his residence from Washington, D.C., to New York, after many years' absence, to resume an old collaboration with his ballet mistress mother, Alexander Fedorova Fokine, at her 2121 B'way studio . . . Leon also took over some of his sister's classes at her Ridgewood, N.J., studio while Irine Fokine was active producing ballets for an extensive series of local bookings with her professional student Ballet Company . . .

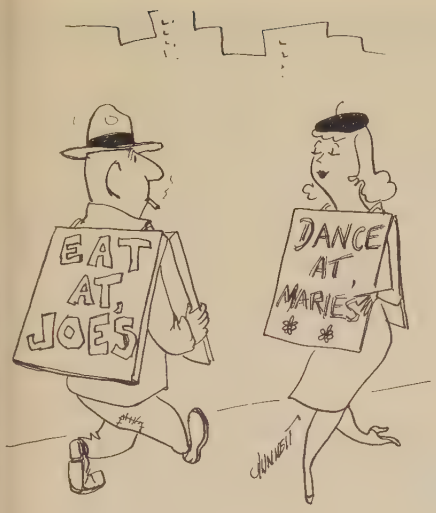
Something called "Hi, Paisano," which rather rashly asserted owing its "entire production" to the conception and staging of Greek choreo. Vassili Lambrinos (formerly of the Teatro Colon of Buenos Ayres) came to an untimely end off-B'way despite advance press notices that the first night was "sold out" . . . Mr. Lambrinos was one of the two choreos. (Jim Russell was the other) originally scheduled to choreograph "New Faces" when Leonard Sillman was producing . . .

Fleming Hgorth is a recently arrived dance student from Denmark . . . Edith Stephen has inaugurated a series of studio concerts on a "more than studio" scale, with lighting and costumes, for Monday evenings . . . Other choreographers were being given a chance to present experimental works or fragments . . . Charles Weidman, working rapidly toward establishing a new neucleus of dance activity since his return to New York, has been presenting weekend programs with Michael Santaro at the Weidman-Santaro "Expression of Two Arts" studio . . . Several guest choreos, companies and dancers have already participated, and additional mid-week performances have hosted soloists including Anne Wilson and Danny Joel (who does his own costuming) . . . Rhoda Levine was another choreo, unfortunately associated off-B'way this season, with "I Want You," a Theodore Flicker production which lasted the flicker of an eye-lid . . . "Heather in Springtime" also dimmed into the mists despite efforts to raise backers . . . "Kicks & Co." was a Broadway show (Walter Nicks, Donald McKayle) with backer problems . . . A musical which promised a brighter picture was "Bella," which Don Sky (who taped several Shary Lewis TV shoes this summer) was choreographing for its Nov. 7 opening—music by Jane Douglass very tuneful, and the Sky numbers, performed by a most talented cast of singer dancers, exciting and original . . . Predicted highlight, a blackout dance sequence with phosphorescent props . . . The dance idioms utilized range from Spanish and jazz to tap and ballet . . .

Elna Laun reported a successful season at Tammiment with some tears shed for a new policy away from original musicals towards a combination of variety style entertainment with a sprinkling of dance concerts . . . According to Miss Laun, "the concerts were very satisfactory, but for the type of audience the new policy is attracting, the entertainment could have been on a less elevated plane." Her dancers were Juanita Boyle and Kathe Howard, who found

romance and matrimony with, respectively, saxophonist Jerry Magner and ballet composer Norman Cooper; and Marlena Tyree, Jane Sparkes, Able Pokras and Frank Andre . . . While "Bella" rehearsed in one room at Showcase Studios, Astaire partner Barrie Chase was rehearsing next door with Bob Fosse . . . The Zachary Solov Ballet Ensemble began another U.S. tour in October, its former musical director, Charles Magnan, after rehearsing with Kirov Ballet ensemble, advised he expected to accompany the Jeannine Charrat company back to Europe in December . . . Oona White's "Let It Ride" assistant choreo. Eugene (Luigi) Lewis, while remaining with the run of the show, resumed teaching interrupted jazz classes at Dance Players' Studio . . . "Sap of Life" composer, David Shire, accompanies Frank Wagner's jazz classes . . . The musical's 15-year-old wardrobe mistress, Leila Livingston (daughter of dancer voice coach, Jorie) is a Wagner student, also studies ballet with Alexandra Danilova at the International Dance School . . . John Harmon another of the school's students and formerly with the Arthur Murray TV show, is one of the leading dancers selected by Carole Haney for "The Magic Nutcracker," Dec. 23 on ABC-TV . . . Danny Carroll, "Music Man" lead dancer, teaches jazz classes at Ballet Arts Studio 61 . . . Merce Cunningham and his company are on the spring agenda of Hofstra College's 1961-62 Playhouse series . . . Now we would take up Joe Layton on an old offer to "walk us in" to one of his shows . . . "Sail Away," please . . . (We might also have cancelled that trip to Europe, when Bob Fosse said "come around" for a Dance Magazine inteview, if we'd known Gwen Verdon was going to be home that evening . . . That Redhead and Moira Shearer have legs Dietrich must envy . . . or is it personality?) . . . Mary Margret is a new dancer we like . . . She's among "Bella" contingent . . . Frances Alenikoff says while in Greece this summer she exchanged dance idioms with a "beautiful dancer, who had all the grace, strength and sense of restrained power that one sees in good Greek folk dancing"—a retired luminary called John Christachis, of Pyrgos Timbachi, in Iraklion, Crete. The two performed in a Greek Cafe, informally, to local delight and an "involved audience which loudly approved the jazz style." Joel Schnee is contributing choreography to Miss Alenikoff's repertoire for the new season which is fully booked including a spring solo tour later . . . Hazel Chung, back in the U.S. from a Ford Foundation Fellowship and local scholarship three year study stint in Indonesia to study Indonesian classical dance; has lined up several solo bookings and lecture demonstrations . . . Her partner, S. D. Humardani, was to return to Indonesia in November . . .

Mary Anthony said she possibly would be resuming TV choreography in the U. S. in spring . . . During her summer series, "Canzonissima," on Italian TV, a one-and-a-half Hit Parade style show, she utilized 14 dancers of all nationalities including two resident Americans, Jimmy Allbright and Virginia Chappell, and one visiting Limon-Graham student, Bob Curtis. She had high praise for Italian dancers Rosanna Scravalli, Marisa Barbaria and Danina Frenandez. Others came from England, Australia, Hungary, Russia, and South America . . . Oriental specialist Mara, hosting us to vodka in her



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travel relic filled Riverside home deplored the labels which bind her annually to restaging "Kismet," and "King and I" for summer tents throughout the country, and asserted that she received less credit for equally satisfactory stagings such as "Peter Pan" (she produced one in Louisiana with 53 small children for the Indian dance) and "Merry Widow." She described her "Merry Widow" as a restoration style version, "frightfully elegant and precious—elegant to distraction—very amusing but witty—not book humour; an entirely new interpretation" . . . American Ballet Theatre's Elizabeth Carroll, promoted this year to soloist, is French born . . . Gail Israel is the promising Ballet Russe dancer who used to turn like a top when we watched her in class, aged 12 . . . Tommy Panko, who formerly assisted Oona White, will choreograph an off-B'way musical of his own . . . Ex-Pat Boone choreo. Bill Foster is doing dance skate extravaganza for TV . . .

With Christmas in the wake, the Children's theatres are stirring, and many jobs for dancers and dance performers were stacking up in this area. Erika Thimey auditioned in New York for her Washington, D.C. Children's Dance Theatre; Lucas Hoving, newly appointed director for the "Merry-Go-Rounders," and Gian Pace, choreo. for "The Merry Wanderers Children's Theatre," auditioned in September. Felix Fibich held several auditions for the Jewish Education Committee sponsored Children's Theatre at Joan of Arc High School, in New York City, and several other companies in the New Jersey and New York vicinity announced satisfactory booking commitments.

The Story-Time Dance Theatre of Sheila Hellman, in Hackensack, N.J., was one; Irine Fokine's professional company of young ballet students which has formed the policy of presenting full-length classical ballets to young audiences on an educational basis, was another. Two groups had outstanding possibilities, one for Broadway, the

other for filming. Dee Henloch reported that she was forming a second company of her "The Story Players, for presentation in a Broadway house. The New Jersey group is booked solid a year ahead; the second company was to be a full Equity unit of the repertoire piece, "Petey and the Pogo Stick." Nelle Fisher, who also was commissioned to stage and direct a package of "The Boy Friends" to tour U.S. Army bases, was awaiting final word on signature of a contract to film her "The Littlest Circus," probably at least partly recast for the event.

* * *

Micheline Bardin, the French ballerina turned night club artist, completed a four week stint Aug. 28 as single star attraction at the Downstairs Room of the Happy Medium in Chicago. With full dance floor, she was able to emphasize the dance features of her one woman sing-dance show . . . On return to New York, she headed for Upstate, performing here and there, prior to departing again on a three week engagement at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Montreal, Canada (scene of her vocal recording debuts), starting Sept. 20 . . .

Alonzo Castro, a frequent Myra Kinch partner at Jacobs Pillow and on tour, and a student of Leon and Alexandra Fedorova Fokine, is guest appearing in his native Peru with the resident company of the Escuela del Ballet Perunao, which recently completed a successful season in Europe . . . Castro returns to New York in January, after also visiting his family . . . The Escuela (school) company is headed by a Scots woman, Kaye MacKinnon, who after residing many years in Paris, married Peruvian composer Luis Bacecho and now also heads the school to which the company is attached . . . Peru's National Ballet Company is headed by a Frenchman . . .

Three choreographers arrived back in New York to prepare for the opening of Ballet Theatre's new season at the 54th Street Theatre, Oct. 2-14 . . . Harald Lander, coming from Paris, Birgit Cullberg from Sweden, and Antony Tudor back from Germany (where he restaged "Lilac Garden" for the new Kurt Jooss Studio Group repertory) were to rehearse their own ballets for the season . . .

* * *

Lucas Hoving returned from Europe Sept. 7. During his trip, he visited Holland, Sweden and Germany, teaching, choreographing, and giving lecture-demonstrations. In Germany, he contributed to the new Jooss studio group repertoire a sofar untitled "suite of love dances" which, with a ballet upon which Kurt Jooss himself is at work, rounds out the present repertoire. Another dancer has returned to Germany from the U.S. to join the company's performing ranks—Tina Bausch, formerly of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet. The last previous dancer to leave was Dieter Klos, who had been dancing on Broadway in "My Fair Lady." Upon resuming activities in New York, in addition to directing the "Merry-Go-Rounders," Mr. Hoving was conducting daily morning classes at the 92nd Street "Y."

* * *

Dance publication designer Karl Leabo has collaborated with editor and dance columnist Robert Sabin, of "Musical Amerca," on the "Martha Graham" art book (Theatre Arts, $1.75) now on sale at book stores . . . Also to be used as a Souvenir Program for the coming

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season, with a special program insert, the book is a pictorial survey and editorial capsule of Miss Graham in her highlight moments . . . Striking photos include those of Soichi Sunami (paradoxically, one in particular, of Miss Graham's hands only); Kenneth Johnson, and Chris Alexander . . .

As part of his return to the New York dance scene, Charles Weidman has inaugurated a regular series of weekend showings in conjunction with fine sketch artist Mikhail Santaro at their 102 West 29th Street studio . . . Dancers assisting Mr. Weidman were listed as Lisa Nowak, Ann Waugh, and guest artists with their own programs on an invitational basis. Mr. Santaro was contributing the sets. Mr. Weidman's full dance company also included Elina Mooney, Milly Nirsch, Max Shuter and Pat Spohn . . . The Metropolitan Opera Ballet held dance auditions after all, early in September . . . Robert Joffrey, choreographing for The New York City Opera, and John Butler with several television projects lined up on arrival back from Europe, were the two choreos. active in casting on the City Center Roster . . . Mr. Butler was to start rehearsing his "Carmina Burana" first week of October for seasonal debut Oct. 27 at the Center . . . Vassili Lambrinos, a Greek choreo. who had been resident at Buenos Ayres famed Colon Theatre until his arrival in the U.S. some two years ago, "conceived and staged entire production" of "Hi, Paisano," a new Equity off-B'way musical which opened Sept. 27 at the New York Playhouse, at which time first night seats were reported as being already "sold out."

° ° °

The Kirov dancers performed the most exquisite "Giselle" we have ever seen. Although we are generally more excited by the Bolshoi Ballet's vivid antics, the Kirov "Giselle" made us weep, which is something the Bolshoi didn't do. The night we went to Kirov, we saw featherlight, ethereal Natalia Makarova and it is hard to say we saw anyone else. However, the pas de deux was thrillingly and

flawlessly done (especially musically) by Galina Kekisheva and Sergei Vikulov. Poor Alorecht never has much to do, but he was distinguished by elegance, good arms and gracious hands. The outstanding feature of the whole performance was the character control of each performer—the Mother, Berthe (Iraida Utretskaya) was a fine example of the perfectly restrained yet deeply evocative acting capacity of these dancers. The regal bearing of a royal party which was truly regal, counterpointed against the proud humility of the simple country folk established the exact mood. Alicia Alonso might also study the soul stirring impact of a mad scene which is highlighted by several moments of deathly stillness. Hair tearers take note . . .

* * *

New York will again see the Philippine Bayanihan Dance Co. this year, this time at the Metropolitan Opera House, Nov. 19 . . . Indian dancer Indrani was also returning to the U.S. Sept. 28 auspiced by the new Asia Society, for a transcontinental tour ending in New York Dec. 11 . . . At New York City Center Nov. 15 through December 3, the Mazowsze company of 100 dancers and singers with symphony orchestra from Poland was to be presented by S. Hurok . . .

Night club choreographer, Buster Burnel, was to choreograph the off-B'way musical, "Heather in Springtime," music by David Levitt .o.o. David Tihmar is choreographing the Genevieve package tour . . . Ballet pianist Charles Magnan was among local rehearsal contingent working with the Kirov ballet . . . Pola Kadison, Polish ballet pianist, was musical accompanist for "Heather in Springtime" . . . Micheline Bardin signed with manager Betty S. Whyte . . . Leon Fokine moved to New York City from Washington, D.C. permanently to assist his mother, Mme. Fedorova, at her 2121 Broadway studio, and his sister, Irine, at her Ridgewood, N.J., school . . .

Buddy Schwab was due to return to New York from Boston and Philadelphia Sept. 30, having appeared in the latter city four weeks at the John Bartrum Theatre . . . Fred Berk, returned from Europe, was not among this year's child company directors planning to be active . . . After tentatively appointing Judith Fibich director of his "Around the World" song and dance program, he later was reported as having decided to drop the company for the present . . .

Valentina Lifvinoff returned to N.Y. following a lecture-demonstration tour on her approach to body training, "Movement and Stillness—What Are They?" Edith Stephen, back from the Gateway Theatre summer season in Belleport, L.I., reported she was to choreograph to off-B'way musicals and stage movement for an unannounced B'way production . . . Ted Cappy, who choreographed the Jones Beach tap extravaganza last year (June Taylor did the Hawaiian production this season), remained in the City area this summer for TV and commercials, including the big Milliken fashion show at the Hotel Astor . . . He is negotiating a one-woman star vehicle which he would stage and direct off-Broadway, with a few supporting performers, no chorus . . .

Frances Alenikoff has bookings lined up through January with a tour of the West and one of New England for her Aviv Theatre of

DANCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

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SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION of DANCE TEACHERS HELD A One-Day session at the Rice Hotel in Houston, Texas, Sept. 27th. Featured on the day's program was Stanley Herbertt who holds a Master Degree from the National Academy of Ballet. Mr. Herbertt was formerly soloist with Ballet Theatre. Chicago Civic Opera, Polish Ballet and numerous other companies. His most recent undertaking was to choeograph "On Gaslight Square" for the St. Louis Civic Ballet.

DANCE MASTERS of MICHIGAN announce their new officers: President, Samuel Lovett; 1st V.P. Joe Cornell; 2nd V.P. Ruth Carney; 3rd V.P. Enid Ricardeau; Past President, Florence Young; Secretary, Martha Heermans; Treasurer, Sylvia Hamer; Directors, LaVerne Connors, Ruth Hanf, Floyd Zimmerman and Eddie Hanf. On Oct. 29th tme Club held a One-Day Session at the Enid Ricardeau Studio in Detroit, Mich. Faculty included: Jack Barnes, Ballroom; Lois Meissner, Ballet, and Beverly Russell, Tap.

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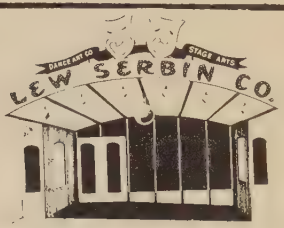

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DANCE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS

You are welcome to send news of Your Association to this Column

LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION of DANCE MASTERS recently launched a State-wide membership drive with the first drive held April 9th at the Bellemont Motel in Baton Rouge. Invitations were mailed inviting prospective members to a free three-hour dance session. Active members on the teaching staff for the special event were: Edith Heslin, Olga Moreau Wegmann and Bill Serutine. After being welcomed by President Gayle Batt, guests were then informed as to the many advantages of belonging to the LADM by Edith Heslin. On Sept. 10th an additional membership drive was held in New Orleans with the following teachers on the faculty: Gayle Batt, Glenda Moss and Bill Serutine. Although the drive came at the same time that Hurricane Carla visited Southern Louisiana, some fourteen prospective members attended.

DANCE MASTERS of HAWAII held its 3rd meeting Oct. 15th at the Dan Wallace Studio in Honolulu. Election of officers for the newly formed club will be held at their next meeting. Among the member teachers are those teaching Ballroom, Ballet, Hawaiian, Tap, Samoan, Japanese, Filipino, etc. Great interest has been shown in the new club since the DMA regional convention held last summer in Hawaii.

Two Fall performances of the Pacific Ballet were held at the Veteran's Auditorium in San Francisco on Oct. 19th and 20th. The program for the two days included: Grazioso, Mozart; Pas de Deux, Leonard Bernstein; Orpheus, Bach, Chavez, Faherman; Josette, Andre Jolievetffi Rounds, David Diamond; Pas de Deux (Bluebird), Tchaikovsky and Tetrameron, Russell Smith. Allan Howard is Premier Danseur and Director, Marc Wilde is Choreographer.

DANCE MASTERS of AMERICA, Club 13 held a One-Day meeting Oct. 1st at the Bellevue Hotel in San Francisco. Faculty included: Mary Conmee, Olga Ziceva, Joanne Nix and Glenna Bell Moening in Barre; Fiona Fuerstner Classical Ballet; Harold Christensen, Pointe Work and Lecture, and Ross MacArthur lectured and demonstrated Hair Styling and Make-up.

DANCE MASTERS of WISCONSIN held its One-Day Session at the Cleo Smith Dance Studio, Oct. 15 in Fond du Lac, Wisc. Faculty included guest teachers: Esther Anderson, Charlotte Colwell, Helen N. Finst, Vesper Chamberlin, Arthur Knapp, Louis Girard, Richard Verhoevne and others. Featured on the lighter side were: A Coffee Hour, Cocktail Hour and a Buffet Dinner.

Seated L to R: Gayle Mackenroth Batt, LADM President, Edith Heslin, Membership Chairman. Standing L to R: Glenda Moss, Bill Seruntine and Olga M. Wegmann.

DANCE EDUCATORS of AMERICA held its Annual Open Material Session Oct. 15th at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City. Faculty included: Jean Phifer, Children's Work; Skip Randall, Modern Jazz; Joe Levinoff, Ballet Terminology; Sonia Woicikowski, Ballet; Bob Audy, Tap; Chris & Louis Dalberth, Lindy; Allan Hall, Cha Cha; Robert Luis, Tango, and John Lucchese, Mambo & Twist.

DANCE MASTERS of OHIO presented its One-Day Convention Oct. 15th at the Nation-Wide Inn in Columbus, Ohio. Faculty included: Art Stone, Tap; George Verdak, Ballet; Sharon Kinney, Modern and Betty Adelman, Ballroom. The next One-Day Meeting will be at the Sheraton Hotel in Akron, Ohio in February.

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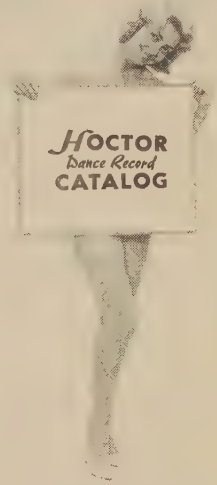

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PLEASE NOTE:

If your organization's activities aren't pictured on these pages, it isn't because we are showing partiality — it's simply because we haven't received any news or photos from your association. The editors have written each association asking for Convention news and photos. So . . . please don't blame Dance Digest if you don't see your own organization on these pages. You're welcome to send us photos and news of your convention as well as any other news — at ANY TIME.

— The Editors.

A POINT OF VIEW ON DANCE INSTRUCTION BY TAX-EXEMPT INSTITUTIONS

Although the following article opposes the editorial stand taken by this magazine on the subject of free, or cut rate dance lessons offered by tax supported institutions, the editors nevertheless feel that Dance Digest readers are entitled to read both sides of any controversial matter. In some small measure, this too, is Democracy in action.—The Editors.

(Continued from last month)

It so happens I first became interested in the Ballroom Dance Field as a student through a program sponsored by Brooklyn College in New York. This experience I shared with many others. Although it may seem like a paradox to those who associate ballroom dancing exclusively with private studios, such public programs have been doing an inestimable service in spreading interest in Ballroom Dancing. This has the after effect of booming the business of the privately owned studio.

Most dance instructors who deal with beginners are painfully aware of popular prejudices against privately owned dance studios by the lay public. There is no use hiding one's head in the sand—one has to face facts even when they are unpleasant. Unfortunate advertising gimmicks by some studios, high pressure selling and other abuses have caused a lot of harm to the progession as a whole. Remember that the corrective action of the F.T.C. branch of the U.S. Government in condemning some abuses, the rash of investigations by a number of state legislators along similar lines, all took place *after the fact*—after the recording of many protests and suits. It has reached a point, whereby many newspapers will play up an exposé story to the discredit of this or that studio, whereas the good work that most dance instructors accomplish goes unmentioned. If only the abuses here and there come in for attention, is it an accident that it is only this side which is seen by an uninformed public? It doesn't take much imagination, then, to see why there are prejudices against the private dance studios. If the innocent dance instructors are made to suffer along with the few that are guilty and lumped together in the same package, that is an unfortunate by-product of this current state of mind.

Here is where such institutions as the Y. or similar non-profit organizations exercise a form of attraction to the public that is simply not available to the privately owned dance studio. I have found from personal experience that people who would sooner be caught dead than in a dance studio are receptive to a dance program at the Y. or similar type organization. The authority, prestige, and good name enables it to attract and influence a portion of the public that would ordinarily be lost to the field of ballroom dancing.

What then happens in many cases happened to me and a number of my friends year sago. We became interested in Ballroom Dancing through these group lessons and realized it was a wonderful combination of art and recreation. It became clear that to progress in the field, we needed private coaching and a type of training that only a specialized private dance studio could furnish. I don't say this happens to everyone but definitely to those who become interested. Many independent studios can thank such programs for any number of their students plus recommended friends.

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Any accredited instructor will readily inform his group that advanced training requires private coaching by specialists in the field. This form of private coaching is not the province of a Y etc. program.

Another point which seems to be neglected is that group or class lessons are not in conflict with private individual or private couple instruction which remain the particular province of the dance studio proper. To my knowledge, the Y. etc., does not offer private instruction but group or class lessons only. There is, of course, the fact that a number of dance studios also offer class instruction. Here at least is a point where some comparison can be made. Allowing for differences in local situations, I have found from personal experience that the price charged by the Y. is not markedly different from that of the independent studio. Both at the Y and at a studio, these lessons have to be self supporting in the amount of attendance. The talk of "unfair competition" doesn't apply here. The studio charges less per person for a group lesson for the hour than it does for a private lesson. Obviously, private and group lessons are simply not comparable. But some people who speak of "unfair competition" compare a price charged for a group lesson at the Y. with that

for a private lseson by a studio. This is not a comparison of the same commodity from any point of view.

Further, the nature of competition eschews price collusion anyway. Prices among studios themselves vary widely—between chains, between chains and independents. There are also all sorts of specialists, mostly individuals, who operate strictly through rented space by the hour. Each have a standard and ultimately it is quality that sells. And where there is quality one doesn't have to worry that someone down the street is offering lessons for a few dollars cheaper. When matters are put on this basis then the cry about unfair price competition is more of a self indictment than anything else.

Among the tax-exempt institutions offering a variety of dance instruction, one finds religious groups, fraternal organizations of all varieties, community clubs, etc. If people become introduced to ballroom dancing under such auspices, I see no threat to the private enterprise teachers. Those who are just interested in a few figures to get around a dance floor could not constitute the core for any significant business anyway. However, those who really become interested and want to improve their dancing become an automatic feeding ground for the private studio – in fact, they beat a path to the door in many instances.

In any case, here is where the opponents of such programs unwittinggly oppose a very essential element of free enterprise which they claim to be upholding. They have completely failed to see that where an accredited instructor is hired, this instructor is pai da fee and this fee compares very favorably with that offered by a dance studio for the same work. Would these people deny an accredited instructor the right to sell services where he or she thinks best? Where one can perhaps get a better fee or better working conditions—the right to choose a job, in other words? These are the implications but no one dares to draw them.

Dance programs by the above mentioned institutions have opened a very important market opportunity for the independent instructor. This market has become a source of livelihood for many in the field. If this is where some instructors prefer to devote their efforts, then, I say, all power to them—provided they are properly accredited and qualified. Now looking at the matter from the viewpoint of one selling services, there are people who would rather do office work in a library than similar work in an industrial establishment, simply because they like the atmosphere. That is what makes the world go around.

Still another point. In the past twenty-five years, the volume of consumer dollars going into the dance business has grown enormously. In fact, the dance field has become big business and has been for some time. Yet the impression is being created that the private dance business is being strangled because of what is called "creeping encroachment" by tax exempt institutions! Following the trend of big business in other fields, the Murrays have an international organization. The Astaire chain is now expanding to England. I do not know the rate of growth of some of the others but the amount of people in the business keeps increasing and the amount of instructors likewise. Obviously, the base, is more and more consumer dollars for dance lessons. But there are some not satisfied. They want all of it. They are obviously bothered by the few dollars in proportion that go to the Y or similar or-

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It might also be mentioned that a number of people cannot afford the fees for private instruction required by the privately owned studio. However, they can afford the lesser fees that are charged for group instruction. In some cases, they prefer to have this group instruction under the auspices of the Y. rather than a studio that might also be offering group lessons. Shall such people be deined the opportunity to have dance instruction on the grounds that if they can't arrange to have it in a dance studio, they can't have it at all?

At least let's set the terms of the problem correctly. The problem is NOT dance programs by tax exempt institutions. These, if anything, are a boon to the private enterprise dance teachers. If dance programs by such institutions are becming popular, the none reason has to be failure of the dance studios to enforce proper methods of advretising and operation. The dance studio *owners* have special problems which do not coincide in some cases with problems of the instructors. It is not the instructors who pay for the public advertising, and if the instructors are constrained to use high pressure salesmanship, then it could be because their jobs depend on how much selling they do.

It is up to the dance studio operators to set their house in order. Lack of proper self regulatory practices that are enforced, invite outside scrutiny in any line of business. Where such business has become big business, public regulation in one form or another is inevitable. The more abuses, the most complaints, the more regulations can be expected.

—Arthur Burton

Accredited Member: Dance Educators of America (U.S.); Imperial Society of T.D. (England).

(Editor's Note: For additional information on this subject see May 1960 Dance Digest's 12 page supplement, price $1).

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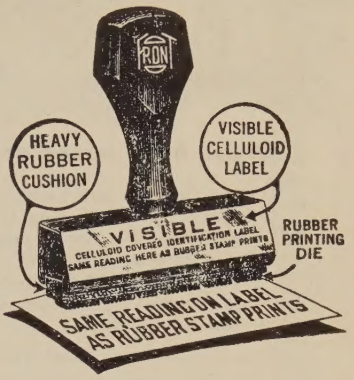

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